



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Memorandum

Subject: **ACTION**: Program Guidance Letter 01-1

Date: March 29, 2001

From: Manager, Airports Financial Assistance
Division, APP-500

Reply to
Attn. of:

To: PGL Distribution List

01-1.1 Currency of Noise Exposure Maps – Vicki Catlett (202)267-8770 and Jim Borsari (202)267-8822.

On December 14, 2000, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) issued its findings regarding the Airport Noise Compatibility Program (see <http://www.oig.dot.gov/audits/av2001012.htm> for a copy of the report). The objective of the OIG audit was to determine if Airport Improvement Program funds were used for the highest priority Noise Compatibility Program projects. One of the findings of the study was that noise exposure maps (NEM) should be reviewed and updated as necessary to reflect changes due to conversion of the airline fleet to Stage 3 aircraft. FAA concurred in this finding and committed to providing this guidance to regions and Airports District Offices.

Part 150 currently contains the requirement that sponsors update their NEMs if there is a substantial increase (DNL 1.5 dB or greater) in the noise contour over noncompatible land uses. However, there is presently no equivalent requirement when there is a significant *decrease* in the noise contour. With the phase out of the heavy (over 75,000 pounds) Stage 2 fleet, airports across the country have experienced a marked decrease in noise over the last few years.

Where airports have experienced a significant shrinkage in their noise contours due to the phase out, it could have an impact on their active Part 150 programs. It could mean some noncompatible land uses are no longer within the noise contour. Also, it is possible that there may be a lesser noise impact for properties deemed noncompatible that still lie within the contour. Substantial noise contour reduction could affect AIP funding eligibility. Failure to reflect up-to-date conditions could cause AIP funding to be directed to lower priority work or to be granted for areas that would be no longer eligible.

For airports that still have active funding programs based on older maps that included a high concentration of Stage 2 air carrier aircraft operations, the sponsor should be required to submit, as part of its request for funding, current noise level information (maps or other sound data) for the area proposed for mitigation. The FAA cannot require Part 150 updates but it can encourage them. Updates to the maps under Part 150 are eligible for AIP funding.

Original Signed By

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